

Application No.: 10/522,437
Response to Office Action of March 13, 2006
Attorney Docket: NOTAR-019US

Amendments to the Drawings:

Please replace Figures 1-6, as originally filed with the replacement sheets submitted concurrently herewith as Exhibit A. The replacement sheets address the objections noted by the Patent Office's Draftsperson, as further discussed in the remarks section below.

REMARKS

This is a response to the Office Action dated March 13, 2006.

I. SUMMARY OF THE OFFICE ACTION

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Muller et al. in view of Noda. The Examiner also rejected Claims 17-19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over IDS citation JP 03-86301 (Kubota) in view of Noda. The Examiner also rejected Claims 17-19 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by IDS Citation XP-002235552 (Kobyzev).

In the summary page of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-19.

Additionally, in the Office Action summary, the Examiner objected to the drawings. A notice of draftsperson's patent drawing review was attached to the Office Action.

II. APPLICANT'S RESPONSE

A. Drawings

Applicant respectfully submits concurrently herewith replacement sheets for Figures 1-6. The replacement sheets address the objections noted by the Draftsperson. In particular, the copy marks in Figures 1-6 has been eliminated. The solid black shading in Figure 1 has been eliminated. Also, the reference numerals in Figure 1 has been oriented in the same direction as the view. Accordingly, the replacement sheets address the objections of the Draftsperson. Accordingly, the Draftsperson's objections have been overcome.

B. Claims 1-12

Claims 1-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Muller et al. in view of Noda. In response, Applicant has amended Claim 1 to further recite that the intermediate working section comprises a two-high edging stand. Also, Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the first reduction ratio is comprised between 10 percent and 30 percent, which is greater than a second reduction ratio comprised between 3 percent and 25 percent. The specific selection of reduction ratios and the order in which the bar is rolled in the first universal stand, the two high ending stand, and the second universal stand is critical based on a contention that it enables lower wear on the first universal stand 30 compared to the second universal stand 30. Also, a better final product having better working tolerances

is produced. Id. Since the first universal stand 30 has less wear, replacement of the rolling stands in the machine may be made at longer time intervals, thereby saving down time losses and replacement costs. Numerous other benefits are discussed in the instant specification at Page 6, line 21 through Page 7, line 14.

Muller and Noda do not disclose (1) the two high edging stands disposed between the first and second universal stands and (2) the specific reduction ratios in the order that the bar is passed through the second universal stand, high edging stand and the first universal stand. In support thereof, Applicant respectfully directs the Examiner's attention to the abstract of Muller which recites that "the compact rolling group is composed of a first and a second universal stand or two-high stand and an intermediate upsetting stand between the first and second stands." As understood, the intermediate upsetting stand, which is believed to correspond with the two high edging stand of the present invention, is left indefinite. In support thereof, it is believed that the reference STZG refers to the intermediate upsetting stand. Applicant has been unable to find a statement in the specification that the STZG is a two high edging stand. As such, the intermediate upsetting stand is left indefinite in the disclosure of Muller.

Moreover, Muller and Noda do not teach such specific combination of reduction ratios in the order which the bar passes through the second universal stand, two high edging stand and the first universal stand. Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner that "the pass sequences and reductions amounts recited in these claims are considered to be merely an obvious exercise of mechanical design to optimize conditions in the desired product." (See Office Action of March 13, 2006, Page 2). As discussed in the instant specification at Page 6, line 21 through Page 7, line 14 the pass sequences and reduction ratios provide numerous benefits. For example, the first universal stand experiences less wear ensuring tolerances for a longer working lifetime, etc. Accordingly, the cited prior art does not disclose, suggest or make obvious the invention recited in Claim 1.

C. Claims 13-16

Only the summary of the Office Action summary rejected Claims 13-16. The Examiner did not provide any substantive reasons for rejecting Claims 13-16 in the Office Action. As such, Applicant will assume that Claims 13-16 are in condition for allowance.

D. Claims 17 and 18

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claim 17 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kubota in view of Noda. Also, the Examiner rejected Claim 17 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Kobyzhev. In response, Applicant has amended Claim 17 to recite a two-high edging stand placed between the first and second universal stands. Also, Claim 17 has been amended to recite that the bar is not held in any of the universal stands of the intermediate working section when the finishing stand works a finishing passage on the bar.

As discussed above in relation to Claim 1, the cited prior art does not disclose, suggest or make obvious the “two-high edging stand” limitation.

Additionally, Applicant respectfully disagrees that the combination of Kubota and Noda would result in a finishing station placed at such a distance from the intermediate working section that, when said finishing stand works a finishing passage on the bar, the bar is not held in any of the stands of the intermediate working section. The reason is that Kubota teaches away from such combination. In particular, Kubota teaches the manner of providing a compact and short rolling line. (see Purpose of Kubota). Kubota, as understood, teaches placing the finishing stand closer to the intermediate working section, not further away from the intermediate working section. Thus, Kubota teaches away from placing the finishing stand at a distance from the intermediate working section such that the bar is not held by the stands of the intermediate working section when the finishing stand is working a finishing passage on the bar. Accordingly, a combination of Kubota and Noda would not result in the invention recited in amended Claim 17.

Applicant also respectfully submits that Kobyzhev does not disclose, suggest or make obvious the invention recited in amended Claim 17. Kobyzhev does not disclose a two high edging stand placed between the first and second universal stands. Also, Kobyzhev does not disclose the limitation of placing the finishing stand at a distance from the intermediate working section such that the bar is not held by the stands of the intermediate working section when the finishing stand is finishing the bar. There is also no motivation to modify Kobyzhev to incorporate these limitations.

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For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 17 is in condition for allowance. Moreover, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 18 which is dependent upon Claim 17 is also in condition for allowance for containing additional patentable subject matter and for being dependent upon an allowable base claim.

E. Cited Prior Art

Applicant acknowledges receipt of the prior art made of record and not relied upon, but considered by the Examiner to be pertinent to Applicant's disclosure. Applicant respectfully submits that the cited prior art, either alone or in combination, does not anticipate, suggest or make obvious the instantly claimed invention.

III. CONCLUSION

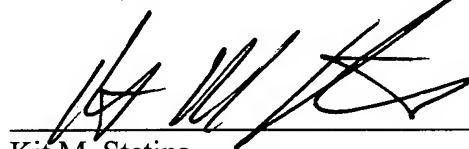
For the foregoing reasons, Claims 1 and 4-18 are believed to be in condition for allowance. An early notice of allowance is therefore respectfully requested. Should the Examiner have any suggestions for expediting allowance of the above-identified application, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicant's representative at the telephone number listed below.

If any additional fee is required, please charge Deposit Account Number 19-4330.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 7/26/06

By:



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